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ABSTRACT

Although schools have served as a major target of both educational and mental-health oriented interventions, they have shown a marked tendency to assimilate innovative programs into existing patterns. This paper analyzes the sources and manifestations of resistance to change in schools and discusses the implications of such resistance for the implementation of innovative programs. Two main sources of resistance are addressed: (1) the school organization, including attributes of organization members and structural features of the school; and (2) the intervention program and stage of program implementation. Additionally, the discussion focuses on manifestations of resistance in an organizational context. An interactional model of resistance is advanced; this model posits interrelationships among stage of program implementation, manifestations of resistance, and sources of resistance. Several research implications are derived from the model. In conclusion, four issues that pertain to educational change are addressed: the positive functions of resistance, the inadequacy of a technological model of planned change, the necessity of considering the school's culture and history, and the importance of effecting structural alterations if lasting change is to be achieved. (RH)

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An Interactional Model for Resistance to Change in Educational Institutions

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Running Head: Resistance to Change in Schools

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Abstract

Schools have been noted to resist innovative practices. This paper analyzes the sources and manifestations of resistance to change in schools and their implications for the implementation of innovative programs. Two main sources of resistance are addressed: (a) characteristics of the school organization, including both attributes of organization members and the school's structural features, and (b) characteristics of the intervention program and stage of program implementation. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the manifestations of resistance in an organizational context. An interactional model of resistance is advanced which takes account of the interrelationships between these various variables and several research implications are derived from this model. In conclusion, four issues which pertain to educational change are addressed: (a) the positive functions of resistance, (b) the inadequacy of a technological model to change, (c) the necessity to consider the school's culture and history, and finally (d) the importance of effecting structural alterations if lasting change is to be achieved.

The Contribution of Organizational Attributes and Change Program Characteristics to Resistance to Change in Schools: An Interactional Model

As yet, no complete and satisfactory body of theory explains the origin and nature of organizational change in institutions; and accordingly, there is no completely adequate body of effective, practical principles for the implementation of planned change (cf. e.g., Mirvis & Berg, 1977). Programs of change in different organizational contexts are hindered and often defeated by an inadequate understanding of the actual processes by which change occurs, and of the complementary processes by which change is resisted and stability maintained.

This paper examines the important but understudied problem of organizational development programs -- the processes by which change is resisted in the school.[1] This provides us with a particularly striking example of the problems of planned change, for although schools have served as a major target of both educational and mental health oriented interventions, they have shown a marked tendency to assimilate innovative programs to existing patterns; i.e., they appear to be innovation-resisting organizations (Shepard, 1969). They are thus said to be in poor "organizational health" (Miles, 1965). The scope of this paper is not to attempt any final evaluation of the vast literature on educational change. Accumulating evidence indicates that the outcome of the extensive expenditure of resources in this area has been disappointing (Baldridge & Deal, 1975; Berman & McLaughlin, 1974, 1975; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1971; Schmuck & Miles, 1971). There is a need rather to examine the bar-

riers to change faced by change agents operating in the educational system. Enlarged knowledge about the processes by which schools deflect and resist change may be useful in facilitating the implementation of innovative programs in these settings.

Research on impediments to organizational innovation has been dominated by investigations of sources of resistance within individual members of an organization (cf. e.g., Lawrence, 1954; NIMH, 1971; Rodgers, 1962).[2] The research that has been done on individual innovators needs to be qualified by the recognition of several additional factors that influence organizational change (cf. e.g., Baldridge & Deal, 1975; Pearlin, 1962; Watson, 1973). Although an individual may be considered an adopter, yet this person functions as part of an organization which has a characteristic time and space ecology that carries strong implications for the implementation of the innovation. Even individual resistance may be rooted in an organizational structure that creates and perpetuates routine. In other words, innovation programs may encounter organizational constraints incompatible with the characteristics of the specific innovation that is being proposed (Weinstein, Note 1).

In this paper two main sources of resistance are considered in analyzing resistance to change in schools: (a) characteristics of the school organization, and (b) attributes of the intervention program. In analyzing how resistance may manifest in the organizational context of the school, I have advanced a model of resistance to change in schools which attempts to account for the interrelationships between the various sources of resistance. Since this model appears to have implications for further research on resistance to organizational change in general, I have sought, in addition to my immediate

purposes, to outline some of these implications.

An Interactional Model of Resistance to Change

Figure 1 outlines a broad model of resistance to organizational change.

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The model proposes that barriers to change derive from an interaction between attributes of organization members, organization structure, and intervention program characteristics. The results of this interaction -- the actual manifestations of resistance -- may differ according to the stage of program implementation. Regardless of the interaction between these three sets of variables: (a) organization members, (b) organization structure, and (c) intervention program features, the probability of encountering specific manifestations of resistance is likely to be stage dependent. I shall now elaborate in more detail each of the sources of resistance outlined by this model.

Sources of Resistance to Change in Schools: The Influence of Organizational Attributes and Change Program Characteristics.

I shall consider two major factors in attempting to uncover the different sources of resistance in schools: (a) the characteristics of the school organization, e.g., attributes of educators and organizational structure; and (b) pertinent features of the change program that may stimulate potential resistance in the members of an organization, e.g., characteristics of the proposed intervention itself and the stage of program implementation.

Organizational Sources of Resistance: Characteristics of Organization Members.

To What Extent Do Personal Characteristics of School Employees Influence Resistance? In this section I will examine the possibility that personal characteristics of educators may influence change processes in schools. Since individuals may seek congruence between personal characteristics and the occupational environment, members of an occupation may share certain characteristics. Hypothetically then, there may exist a modal educator personality, characterized by attributes not conducive to change and different from members of other occupations. The discussion will concentrate on teachers; unfortunately, less is known about principals -- the "gatekeepers" of change. It has been suggested (Wiggens, 1975) recently that the influence of organizational expectations prevails over the principal's personality characteristics, especially as the length of incumbency increases.

The possible determinants of modal occupational behaviors range from organizational-structural to individualistic-personological characteristics (cf. Lefkowitz, 1977). I shall examine the hypothesis of the existence of a modal teacher by investigating three possible loci of selection: (a) organizational selection, (b) self-selection from a restricted population, and (c) self-selection of a predisposed personality type.

Organizational selection is unlikely to occasion strong homogeneity of teachers since (a) educator training always has been highly accessible and characterized by non-elitist admission standards, and (b) teaching enjoys a wide occupational "decision-range": it does not discourage early decisions -- partially because of its early visibility to young children -- nor does it constrict later ones (Lortie, 1975). High accessibility and wide decision

range encourage different patterns of entry, however, thereby raising the probability of candidate heterogeneity.

The evidence for self-selection from a restricted population is meager with the exception of a certain division by sex; at the elementary level, education is a woman's occupation, while males predominate in higher education (Clark, 1964). The social background of teachers comes close to representing a cross-section of the American public (National Educational Association, 1963)

The wide decision range diminishes the chances of self-selection from any restricted population. The occupation's subjective filter -- what people think is required for success in teaching -- works in the same direction: personal and interpersonal qualities are underscored at the expense of intellectual competencies (Lortie, 1967). This subjective requirement suggests a flexible justification since it is difficult to affirm that one does not possess such qualities (Lortie, 1975).

Finally we turn tc personality self-selection. Unfortunately, most of the studies on the teacher personality were conducted prior to the mid-sixties and teacher recruitment patterns may since have changed. With this limitation in mind, is there evidence for personality self-selection? Studies have found that teachers deviate from the norms on "deference" and "order" (Jackson & Guba, 1957), and that teachers, or teachers-in-training, are slightly more submissive and less likely to take leadership than other students (Leeds, 1956). Other researchers have underscored teachers' needs for dependence and structure (Bidwell, 1965; Blumberg & Schmuck, 1972; Getzel & Jackson, 1963).

Examination of teachers' occupational attitudes (Lortie, 1975) shows that teaching is likely to attract people with a bias towards perpetuation of occupational status quo. In particular, teaching appeals most strongly to persons who are favorably disposed towards the existing schools system and who have only limited interest in school-wide concerns.

Implications of Teacher Characteristics for Change. Teachers' need for dependence and structure, their lack of active interest in occupational affairs, and their strong identification with current practices may add up to behavior patterns which impede change. The extent to which these characteristics actually will hinder change may depend upon the aims of the change program. For example, Blumberg & Schmuck (1972) have described the objectives of change programs that adhere to the notion of organizational self-renewal, i.e., attempts that enable organizations to adapt continuously to changing environmental demands. Since the prospect of replacing a traditional organizational structure with one characterized by greater looseness, informality, and confrontation may be particularly threatening to persons with strong needs for structure and dependency, a mismatch exists between teacher characteristics and such change objectives, increasing the probability of teacher resistance to self-renewal programs.

The degree to which teacher characteristics will impede school change also depends upon the extent to which these characteristics are neutralized by institutional controls. In this respect, it should be noted that social settings differ in the extent to which they limit or prescribe behaviors, and hence, as to whether they encourage the expression of individual differences. Change programs may heighten the ambiguity of situations and widen the range

of behaviors permitted in a social setting through a redefinition of role obligations. Since enlarged diffusion of roles and importance of personality may increase simultaneously, the influence of teachers' personality characteristics upon organizational behavior may increase when change programs are being implemented.

Organizational Sources of Resistance: Organizational Characteristics and Educator Roles.

Organizational Characteristics of Schools and Their Implications for Change. This section aims to define broadly the organizational attributes of schools that are of particular importance to the outcome of innovative programs the educational system.

The genotypic function of schools: Maintenance. The genotypic function of schools, i.e., the role it performs as a subsystem of the larger society (Katz & Kahn, 1978), is that of maintenance; schools are "devoted to the socialization of people for their roles in other organizations and in the larger society" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 145). This function accords both with the Durkheimian notion of education as "the place where society recreates itself in the young" (Boocock, 1973), and with the view of schools as major personnel-certifying agencies (Meyer & Rowan, 1978).

As a maintenance system, the school contributes to the preservation of the social status quo. First, children acquire in school essential collective behaviors and beliefs which enable them to take their place in society without causing serious disturbance (Boocock, 1973). Through a "hidden curriculum" (Jackson, 1967), they learn to comply with the wishes of persons outside of

the family and to live in a hierarchical social structure. The teacher becomes the childrens' first "boss" and the classroom their "first initiation into the austerity of duty" (Durkheim, 1961). Second, educator roles contribute to social stability by offering the potential for upward social mobility. Teaching, therefore, has significant social linkages to other social institutions -- and such interdependence between nominally discrete sectors of society often leads to mutual support and adaptation (Lortie, 1975).

Educational practices, therefore, are tied to social changes. The present form of schooling is not coincidental; the school has been allowed to assume its present form partly because its product is congruent with established social needs (Christie, 1971). This "symbiotic" relationship between educational practices and social interests has important implications especially for radical educational change. Since increased local autonomy, horizontalization of educator roles, different admission criteria, and removal of the grading system may have far-reaching social consequences, such innovations are likely to be met with widespread social resistance and are unlikely to be initiated independently of more comprehensive social change.

School-environment boundaries. The school is a vulnerable organization (Miles, 1965; Sieber, 1975), i.e., it has only modest capacity to resist external influence attempts. This vulnerability may stem (a) from the school's controlling forces; school boards have almost complete control over school policies (Corwin, Lane, & Monahan, 1975), (b) from the school's crucial role in socializing children, and (c) from the relatively free flow of information between schools and their environments. As "people-processing" organizations schools are dealing with an extremely valuable property -- children --

who daily return to their homes with accounts of the educational process (Miles, 1965).

Institutional vulnerability may influence innovation in two ways. First, and perhaps most importantly, vulnerable organizations tend to avoid changes that will disturb the local community. Second, vulnerability may affect the organization's internal relationships. In schools, external pressure may increase the perceived necessity for staff consensus and subject teachers to stronger informal control. Departures from typical classroom practices may be subtly discouraged in order to avoid outside comparisons of staff members (Sieber, 1975).

Low organizational complexity. Many schools, primary schools in particular, are "flat" organizations; they lack a complex hierarchical system of power and authority (Blumberg & Schmuck, 1972). They are "under-organized" (Baldridge, 1975); they have less role differentiation, fewer problem-solving experts, and a smaller number of support services than many other organizations.

Structural complexity facilitates change by increasing the number of organizational alternatives. Complex organizations have more specialists who can handle particular subtasks and thus initiate searches for improved procedures. Large size may facilitate innovation by creating problems of coordination and management which demand innovation, and at the same time may make special solutions possible by giving access to the necessary means (Baldridge, 1975; Baldridge & Burnham, 1975). Schools -- small in size and low in organizational complexity -- may lack the complex organizational system necessary to implement and sustain innovations.

Lack of internal organization. Schools are characterized by low interdependence between subsystems. This "structural looseness" (Bidwell, 1965), or "loose coupling" of structure and activities (Weick, 1976; Meyer & Rowan, 1978), can be observed in several areas. First, it can be seen in the autonomy of the teacher's role. Teachers typically work alone. Teacher role performance, therefore, is organizationally non-integrative; collaboration among teachers is not generally emphasized. In fact, the strong "separatist norms" existing in schools have led some to describe teaching as a lonely profession (Sarason, Levine, Goldenberg, Cherlin, & Bennett, 1966). Second, loose coupling is evident in the lack of coordination and control that educational organizations have over their technical activities, particularly with respect to evaluation of teacher performance (Meyer & Rowan, 1978). Interaction in schools is thus characterized both by the assumption of "good faith" and by the actualities of decoupling. "This is logic of confidence: Parties bring to each other the taken-for-granted, good-faith assumption that the other is, in fact, carrying out his or her defined activity" (Meyer & Rowan, 1978, p. 101). Loose coupling may additionally be observed in the school's physical structure -- a single school is part of a larger educational system -- and is also reflected historically in the cellular growth of the educational system (Lortie, 1975).

The school's loose coupling may also serve change-related functions (Weick, 1976) in that a low degree of interdependence may allow for a certain "elasticity", e.g., one part of an organization may adapt more easily to local contingencies. At the same time, however, the low degree of interdependence may also increase the organization's resistance to change (Miles, 1967): if changes occur in one part, they can more easily be sealed off, since fewer

channels are available for their transmission to other sections of the organization. Loose coupling, illustrated by the lack of integration of the teacher role and the isolation of the classroom, may also encourage a non-collaborative stance among school personnel alluded to earlier. Norms stressing collaboration are not salient in most schools. Staff meetings, for example, usually do not take place, and when teachers come together between hours, discussions on work-related topics are conspicuously absent (Sarason et al., 1966).

Characteristics of Educator Roles and Their Implications for Change. The complexity of the teacher's role is reflected accurately in the lack of concepts describing what it is precisely that teachers do. The number and diversity of children, the pressure to adhere to a fixed time-schedule, and the "hidden curriculum" (Jackson, 1967) present the teacher with an almost insurmountable task. In addition, teaching is full of uncertainties (Lortie, 1975); it is marked by an absence of by concrete models for emulations, unclear lines of influence, multiple and controversial criteria, ambiguity about assessment, and instability in the product. Teachers do not participate in a technological culture on which they can draw to resolve these problems.

Two aspects of the teacher's role may be particularly pertinent to the issue of educational change: (a) quasi-professionalism, and (b) the non-integrative nature of the role. The social status of teaching is ambiguous. Although teaching always has been considered important, teachers have never succeeded in gaining more than nominal control over their day-to-day operations, or over pedagogical theory (Lortie, 1975). Teaching is not a full-fledged profession, according to Freidson's (1970) definition of the term. It

has not yet assumed a dominant position in a division of labour entailing control over the substance of its work. In fact, perhaps in no other profession, except nursing, are members so formally subordinate to administrators.

This semi-professionalism may produce status insecurity. Innovations are often resisted by teachers because they imply further restrictions on "professional autonomy," and because they threaten the teacher's insecure self-image as an expert in his own field. Status insecurity in organizations has also been observed to cause "ritualism", or overcompliance with means to the neglect of ends (Sieber, 1975). It may also account for the notable tendency among teachers to avoid informal communications on teaching.

Teachers' roles are non-integrative; i.e., teachers can perform their task with minimal staff communication (Miles, 1967). In general, teachers have only moderate interest in school-wide concerns. The classroom is the "cathected forum" (Lortie, 1975), and relationships with students are teachers' most important source of gratification. This emphasis upon affective-particularistic relationships may create resistance against accepting advice from outsiders, even from other teachers (Sieber, 1975). Outsiders do not "know" the students well enough.

This non-integrative pattern is perhaps strengthened by educators' typical pattern of socialization. It is characterized by individualism -- one's own experience is underscored (Lortie, 1975). Since innovation typically necessitates group-problem solving and professional collaboration, the negative implications of this pattern for innovation may be considerable. Change program participation would therefore implicate a marked change in teachers' modal job performance.

With the exception of a few innovations such as team teaching, the historical development of teaching has been characterized by an impressive continuity. The range of stabilities include the disposition of authority in the schools, the status of teachers inside and outside of educational institutions, the organization and nature of the core task, the rate of technological changes, and the conditions which surround entry into the role (Lortie, 1975). This remarkable stability may result from the lack of a powerful technology by the aid of which teachers could have emerged as a full-fledged profession. In this respect, it is illuminating to compare teachers to physicians, whose impressive professional control may be the consequence of the emergence of a medical technology (Perrow, 1965).

The principal constitutes the main link between the school, the community, and the larger educational system. The pressure of both external and internal demands place principals in a boundary role; they become mediators between different forces (Wiggins, 1975). As the "gate-keepers" of change, they can importantly encourage or discourage an atmosphere of educational innovation (Chesler, Schmuck, & Lippit, 1963).

Principals' actual influence over daily school routines, however, is restricted (Becker, 1953; Chase, 1953; Lortie, 1975; Moyer, 1955), and they must manage a complex enterprise without extensive powers. For instance, teachers are not likely to accept principal leadership unless their main expectations are fulfilled. Principal control over classroom processes is especially limited. Their restricted influence is also evident in the ways change programs are introduced into schools; whereas many programs originate outside schools, principals frequently are responsible for their implementation, often regard-

less of whether they approve of the intervention or not.

Principals are frequently chosen because they have been "good" teachers (Wiggins, 1975). Like most teachers, they are oriented more towards interpersonal relations than towards the total school organization. Their teacher experience, in other words, continues to influence their view of the school (Sarason, 1971). The principal, therefore, emerges as an organizational manager with a limited notion of an organization (Blumberg & Schmuck, 1972).

Change programs, however, typically demand changes in organizational norms and create needs for coordination and group-problem solving. Teacher experience is insufficient for the tasks confronting the principals as organizational managers. Or change programs run the risk of exposing their incompetence in these areas, so the predisposition to respond negatively to innovation proposals is reinforced by the wish to avoid the inherent, often complicated problems of leadership and collaboration.

With the limited work-related communication among teachers, principals achieve a central position in the school's communication-networks, i.e., the communication patterns tend to evolve into a series of separate, dyadic relationships between the principal and different teachers (Blumberg & Schmuck, 1972). Dyadic interaction is likely to impede innovative programs which emphasize group efforts, organizational coordination, and other changes that may violate the non-collaborative attitudes of educators.

Change Program Sources of Resistance: Characteristics of the Intervention Program.

Models of organizational intervention vary from problem-centered one-to-one consultation to group-consultation and social action models. Perhaps the most ambitious attempt to classify intervention has been advanced by Blake and Mouton (1976). Their three dimensional model -- the Consulcube -- has a hundred cells "each of which represents the characteristics of a particular kind of intervention being applied to a particular kind of client who is facing a particular kind of problem" (p. 6). Another important distinction has been drawn between process and content consultation (Goodstein, 1978).

The variety of intervention possibilities suggests that program characteristics -- both intervention strategies and their targets of change -- must be included as an additional source of resistance to organizational change because different intervention procedures may elicit different responses from organization members. Although research has not yet addressed itself systematically to the issue of "fit" or discrepancy between properties of innovations and of organizations, moderate support for this hypothesis exists. Process consultation, for example, has been found to cause more resistance in human service than in business organizations (Goodstein, 1978). Also, confrontation interventions are limited in their usefulness in many cases because the clients may perceive this approach as criticism and feel that it reduces their ability to control the situation (Blake & Mouton, 1976).

Change Program Sources of Resistance: Stages of the Implementation Process.

Two analytical approaches to planned change have been outlined (Berman &

McLaughlin, 1974). The adoption model, originating in a rational view of bureaucratic behavior, locates the primary barriers to change in the deficiencies of planning, communication, and quality of knowledge. It locates the main problem of change in program adoption. The other model -- the implementation model -- recognizes that adoption is only one of several phases in the change process. It stresses the tendency of the organizations to fall back into pre-existing patterns of behavior after the innovation has been adopted. This model views innovation as an unfolding process of different stages which appear in a certain order. Berman & McLaughlin (1975) have outlined three such stages: (a) initiation, (b) implementation, and (c) incorporation. Initiation refers to the period when the decision to adopt the project is taken. Implementation takes place when the project confronts the institutional setting and must be translated into practice. Incorporation takes place when the innovative practice looses its "special project" status and becomes part of routinized activity.

Of the several sources of resistance to change that may operate throughout the innovative process, some may be grouped according to the stage during which they are most likely to operate (Zaltman, Duncan, & Holbek, 1973). During the earliest phase, for example, some of the barriers to change are the need for stability, the potential impact of the innovation on existing social relationships, local pride, and the challenge outsiders may represent to local status positions. During the "implementation" phase, the most important sources of resistance may be the lack of participation of key members, personnel changes, and the disruption of the organization caused by the innovation.

Manifestations of Resistance to Change in Schools

Forces that oppose organizational change may appear in a variety of ways, frequently as elusive, but effective neutralizations of change efforts rather than unmitigated rejections (cf. e.g., Graziano, 1969). This makes necessary an adequate recognition of the manifestations of resistance in the organizational context. Unfortunately, the literature on organizational behavior is wanting in this respect. Holter (1970), therefore, applies concepts from family theory to describe resistance to organizational change. Since both families and organizations are social systems with a history, and since both represent institutional solutions to social needs, their processes may be sufficiently similar to assume some overlap in the way they respond to change.

The following list, although not exhaustive, attempts to indicate some of the main ways in which organizational resistance differs from individual resistance.

Silencing is observed when people withdraw, letters are unanswered, interaction become formalized according to bureaucratic rules, or people are suddenly too busy to discuss the problems (Holter, 1970). A related phenomenon is the lack of participation in change efforts described by McIntyre (1969).

Double-communication has received considerable attention in family theory, and it can be found as well in organizational contexts (Holter, 1970). It is characterized by a discrepancy between verbal statements and actions. For example, when confronted with disagreeable information, the response may be that the information is important, but still, is seems impossible to find

time and space to discuss it.

Problem-displacement takes place when attention is paid to something other than the real problem. The problem may be individualized as when one person is singled out as the primary problem (Holter, 1970). Scapegoating may be another term for this process.

Special alliances refer to attempts particular persons or groups make within the organization to establish a special relationship with the change agents in order to control or redefine the intervention.

Deflation is the practice of diminishing the place and importance of a new idea, while maintaining a front of full agreement (Mathiesen, 1966).

Absorption takes place when an innovation is subtly changed in order to make it fit better with the existing organizational structure while the name and the appearance are retained. For example, a group-counseling program in a prison was changed into a regular educational course with bureaucratic rules and a clear division of authority contraveing the original intention to alter the custodial regime and blur some power lines (Mathiesen, 1966). Berman & McLaughlin (1975) describe a related form of interaction between innovation and setting -- the process of cooptation of the change program by its host setting, i.e., the project design is modified without any comparable modification of the institutional setting itself.

While these examples derive mainly from observations of industrial and correctional settings, they may to a certain degree be illustrative of resistance in educational settings, since as bureaucratic settings (Bidwell, 1965), schools share some properties with industrial and correctional settings. The

fate of Condell's consultation program (Condell, Anderson, & Ebinger, 1966) exemplifies how special alliances serve the function of resistance in schools: by choosing the principal as their key informant, the consultants were cast into a more traditional role than they had intended. On the whole, only a few attempts have been made to describe actual manifestations of resistance to change in schools, although it is generally accepted that educators have developed a repertoire of "cooling-out" techniques for dealing with outsiders (Lortie, 1975; Sieber, 1975).

A stage model of change suggests that the manifestations of resistance depend upon the stage of the change process. "Silencing" may be used more frequently early in the process in order to avoid contact with the change agents, whereas attempts to form "special alliances" are more likely to take place early in the period of actual contact between the consultants and the organization. "Lack of participation" may pose the most serious problem in the implementation phase, while "absorption" and "cooptation" are most likely encountered during the "incorporation" phase.

Some Recommendations for Research

Several recommendations for future research can be derived from the model outlined in Figure 1.

1. There is a need to examine the extent to which resistance to change reflects incompatibility between existing organizational arrangements and characteristics of the intervention program. Specifically, under what organizational conditions are specific program attributes likely to be associated with resistance?

2. What is the nature of the relationship between organizational attributes and resistance? First, are differences on dimensions along which organizations are known to differ significantly related to their innovative capacity? Second, are some manifestations of resistance (e.g., absorption) more likely to be associated with structural attributes than with the characteristics of organization members?

3. What is the nature of the relationship between the type of organization and manifestations of resistance? Holter (1970), for example, suggests that "silencing" is observed most frequently in large, authoritarian organizations, while "double-communication" is encountered more often in quasi-democratic organizations with vaguely defined products.

4. There is need for greater specifications of our hypotheses about organizational resistance. Although organizational controls are never complete, the number and magnitude of slips in controls may increase when change programs are implemented. It is important to examine where and how these slips take place. Once such "loci" in the organizational structure have been identified, specific hypotheses can be generated about the relative importance of individual characteristics of organization members versus organizational regularities as sources of resistance under these specific conditions, and about the particular processes they may affect.

5. Through what stages do school and other organizational change programs proceed, and what are the specific barriers to change associated with each stage?

6. There is a need to examine more thoroughly the actual manifestations

of organizational resistance and to develop a comprehensive taxonomy of such manifestations.

7. There is a need to examine how manifestations of resistance is differentially related specific targets of change, e.g., curriculum, mental health interventions, etc.

Conclusion

Resistance to Change: Some Positive Functions.

So far, resistance to change has been treated uniquely as a negative factor in organizational behavior. Resistance may, however, occasionally be adaptive (Zacker & Bard, 1973) and even a necessary prerequisite for lasting organizational change (Klein, 1969; Zacker & Bard, 1973). For example, the sources of individual resistance may be valuable expressions of efforts to maintain a sense of self-esteem, competence, and autonomy. If change programs are implemented without proper consideration of these factors, the result may be a diminished psychological sense of community among the organization members with consequent negative results for the program objectives.

Resistance to change may be based upon a realistic appraisal of earlier experiences, and it may convey information about the nature and values of the organization. School personnel are constantly exposed to change proposals. New programs may be perceived as similar to previous unsuccessful ones, and elicit a "here we go again" reaction. Only under the assumption that all change is inherently good, and that change agents represent the correct perspective in every detail, could resistance be considered in negative terms. Since this assumption is difficult to defend, the intentions and rationality

of the "resistors" should be taken seriously, giving them a more equal and active role in the innovative process.

The Inadequacy of a Technological Model of Planned Change.

A technological model of change assumes an innovation to be a relatively stable product which, once adopted, generates its own momentum and proceeds mechanically through predictable stages of implementation in various contexts (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974). It presupposes a passive target population and assumes that an intervention strategy can be assessed independently of concrete organizational settings.

Such a mechanistic view of organizational change should be replaced by a more complex model that acknowledges that organization and change programs engage in a series of interactions in which each part influences, redefines, and modifies the other. Successful outcomes of change programs require a mutual adaptation between project design and setting (Berman & McLaughlin, 1975).

Two additional considerations also suggest that a technological approach is inadequate. First, problems of social change are inherently "wicked;" they lack the clarifying characteristics of the "tame" problems for which technological solutions initially were developed (see Rittel & Webber, 1973, for an illuminating description of "wicked" problems). Second, it is likely that the incidence of "divergent" causality (Langmuir, 1943) is pervasive enough in complex organizations to prevent an innovation from being a stable product which proceeds mechanically through predictable stages towards a predetermined outcome regardless of environmental fluctuations.

Intimate knowledge of the setting is an important prerequisite for suc-

cessful change. The school culture is the result of interaction between individuals and the environment occurring over long periods of time. To intervene in a school, therefore, is to intervene in a complex social system with a history. Katkin's (1972) account of his experiences as a consultant in a maximum-security prison, for example, is a disillusioning, but profoundly enlightening illustration of the consequences of entering a social system without a clear conception of its distinctive character. An important reason for failures of change programs in schools is a considerable underestimation of the complexity of the school culture, its history, and its usual ways of accommodating to change. Attempts at changing specific processes in schools need to consider how the schools' culture will affect program implementation. Awareness of the history of the organization also may aid the change agent in establishing rapport and credibility during the phase of entry (Reppucci & Saunders, 1977), and in providing information about whether proposed changes address themselves to perceived needs and problems.

The Importance of Structural Regularities in Effecting and Sustaining Change.

The discussion has underscored the importance of effecting structural changes if lasting change is to be effected. This principle is further reinforced by the finding that structural regularities give rise to perceived constraints against change which interfere with the completion of tasks inherent in group consultation (Weinstein, Note 1). Sensitivity training and related techniques -- major tools in many change programs -- rely mainly upon individual change, and may underestimate the environmental constraints inherent in the daily work environment. In fact, the effect of the transfer of improved interpersonal skills to the organizational setting may be negligible in cases

where no other changes are made. Even in cases where resistance is caused mainly by individual characteristics, the resistance may be overcome independently of attention to its individual sources (Caplan, 1969). It may be most useful to assess the environmental conditions whenever one seeks strategies to induce changes. This conclusion should not be construed to deny the importance of personality constructs in understanding behavior, but only to argue that fruitful assessment for change should primarily take account of environmental conditions.

Footnotes

1. Organizational theory has been dominated by the study of business and industrial organizations. Investigators recently have begun to question whether the principles of change and intervention derived from these types of organizations are readily applicable to human service organizations. Human service organizations, defined as "the set of organizations whose primary function is to define or alter the person's behavior, attributes, or social status in order to maintain or enhance his well being" (Hasenfeld & English, 1974, p. 1), have their own distinctive attributes (Harshbarger, 1974; Hasenfeld & English, 1974; Kouzes & Mico, 1979) which may significantly influence the processes by which changes occur and stability is maintained. Interventions in human service organizations must therefore recognize their unique qualities (e.g., Reppucci, 1973; Weisbord, 1976).

2. This neglect may be attributed in large part to faulty but widely held assumptions about the attitudes of members of social organizations. For one thing, the theoretical framework of influence studies has been a model of social compliance that emphasizes conformity (Bennis, Benne & Chin, 1969); for another, the rationalistic model frequently applied to planned change, views organization members as constantly seeking better solutions to organizational inefficiencies, having reliable means for identifying improved procedures, and eagerly adopting proved innovations (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974). Within this model, the persistence of old methods and goals are regarded as being caused by a shortage of alternate solutions and not by barriers inherent in organizational arrangements. Alternatively, this tendency to look exclusively "inside" organization members appears to be influenced by three related factors.

First, the concept of "resistance to change" came into prominence through psychoanalytic theory and has consequently been strongly associated with the psychology of the individual. Second, organizational psychology has directed considerable effort to assimilating and adapting the results of personality theory. This research has examined such individual difference variables as innovativeness, conformity, need for order and structure, and locus of control. Some researchers have probed the relevance of these variables for organization behavior (cf. e.g., Cartwright, 1965) and others have examined typical innovators, i.e., the first members of a social system who adopt new practices (cf. e.g., Rodgers, 1962). Third, since social structures are less visible than people and less accessible to highly controlled experimentation, it may frequently be more difficult to isolate and define the behavioral processes of institutions than of individuals.

Reference Notes

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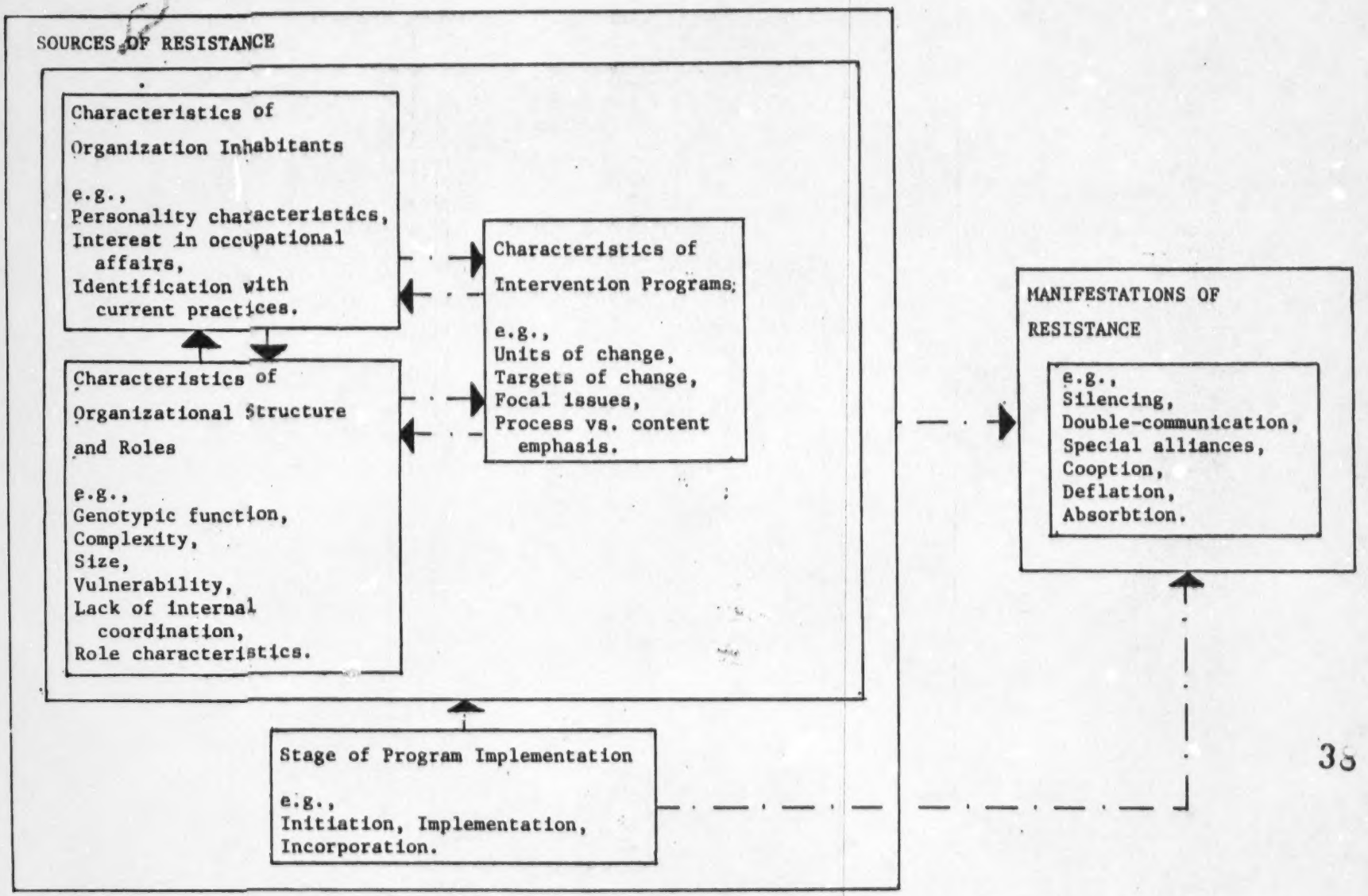

Figure 1. A Model of Resistance to Change in Organizations